

Rare Animal Species of Stokes County

Corvus corax (common raven)

This bird is considered significantly rare by the Natural Heritage Program of North Carolina. The common raven is normally associated with boreal forests and is most common in the higher elevations of the Blue Ridge Province of the state. Recently (in the last 20 years) it has been recorded nesting in more easterly localities in the Piedmont with nesting documented at Pilot Mountain and Hanging Rock State Parks. Ravens forage over a wide range and sometimes can be found in the vicinity of campsites and picnic areas during early morning at first light. They usually will not be seen around public areas later in the day. Nest sites are usually on cliff faces.

Etheostoma podostemone (riverweed darter)

The riverweed darter is a species of special concern in North Carolina. This small fish is restricted to the upper Roanoke river drainage of Virginia and North Carolina, where it is common. It is listed as a species of special concern in North Carolina because of its limited range. In North Carolina it is known from Stokes and Rockingham Counties where it is found in large streams of the Dan River system. It favors rock riffles with moderate to swift current, often associated with riverweed. Food is primarily midge larvae, but includes other insect larvae and pupae. The riverweed darter is intolerant of heavy siltation. The presence of this, the Orange-fin Madtom, the Bigeye Jumprock, and Rustyside Sucker in the headwaters of the Dan emphasize the importance of maintaining good water quality in the river.

Exoglossum maxilllingua (cutlips minnow)

The cutlips minnow is found in upland areas from Canada to upper Piedmont North Carolina. It is considered an endangered species in North Carolina because of its limited distribution; it is known from only one stream in the Dan River drainage. The North Carolina population is the southern extent of its range; the species is secure in other parts of its range. Cutlips minnows occupy small to moderate size creeks with gravel or rubble bottoms. They can be found beneath undercut banks at the bottoms of pools and depend on clear, quiet water. It is unusually susceptible to siltation. Reduction of siltation threats is needed to sustain their populations.

Hemidactylium scutatum (four-toed salamander)

Though this species is widely distributed in the northeastern United States, its populations are scattered in North Carolina. This bog dweller requires seepages or shallow ponds with moss-covered logs, roots, and grass clumps over quiet water. The moss clumps appear to be important as sites where the females lay eggs and attend them until they hatch. The terrestrial adult form of this salamander lives in hardwood forests, which must be adjacent to the wetlands